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AUTHOR Holmes, Barbara J.
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ABSTRACT

This paper suggests that communication theorists and other concerned scholars rechart the direction for study of intercultural communication. It is counterproductive to focus attention solely on discrete and often fragmentary differences between cultures; an approach is required which will permit the recognition of cultural similarities as well. A holistic frame of reference is necessary for conceptualizing the relationships between humans and culture, and between culture and communication. Models are presented that depict culture as an open system which comprises three subsystems: technological, sociological, and ideological. A definition is advanced which explicitly links communication and culture and which demonstrates that communication is the ingredient that binds humans and culture. A focus for research and study based on this theory is also defined. (Author/KS)

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Suggestions for the Study of Intercultural Communication

by

Barbara J. Holmes

Dept. of Communication
University of Colorado
Boulder, Colorado 80309

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Suggestions for the Study of Intercultural Communication

Abstract

This paper suggests that communication theorists and other concerned scholars re-chart the direction for the study of intercultural communication. The premise here is that it is counterproductive to focus our attention only on discrete and often fragmentary bits of information about differences between cultures. Differences in language and social custom may or may not interfere with intercultural communication. An approach is required which will permit both the recognition of cultural differences, and, more importantly, take account of similarities between peoples around the globe.

Perhaps a more practical solution can be found both for study and for actual contact situations if we adopt a holistic frame of reference for conceptualizing "humans and culture" and "culture and communication." Models are presented which depict culture as an open system comprised of three subsystems (technological, sociological, and ideological). These models illustrate the common structural and functional properties of cultures. Viewed in this manner, the interface between humans, culture, and communication is more explicit. A definition is advanced which explicitly links communication and culture and which also demonstrates that communication is the ingredient which binds humans and culture.

Cultural "topoi" are suggested for our research and study interests together with suggestions for methods and techniques in research.

Suggestions for the

Study of

Intercultural Communication

I.

NEED FOR NEW DIRECTIONS: SOME PROBLEMS OF "DIFFERENCE" ORIENTED STUDIES

Many studies about intercultural communication tend to focus on differences between people, and attempt to suggest ways of overcoming these differences. The result has been a wide collection of fragmented and isolated bits of information. This paper suggests that communication theorists and other concerned scholars re-chart the direction for the study of intercultural communication.

Many factors have contributed to the growing academic awareness of potential obstacles to intercultural communication. One such factor is the "great powers" tension which has mounted since the two World Wars; another is the increased tension generated as various peoples around the world have undertaken to win independence through nationalistic movements. Indeed, in this country, social change has recently promoted direct and continuous contact between peoples who had previously been socially inaccessible to one another. And, again, tension has resulted. Such tensions clarify the need for more than cursory communication between persons of diverse cultures. Clearly such communication

presents difficulties. The more obvious difficulty would appear to be that participants in an intercultural communicative act may not speak the same language or the same dialect. More profoundly, social custom, tradition, values and so on, may also hinder the intercultural communicative act.

Indeed, scholars in several social science disciplines have called attention to the fact that people in one culture may perceive things quite differently from the way people in another culture do. Hall (1959, 1966) has described varying cultural conceptions about time, space, and personal distance. Allport and Pettigrew (1957) and Segall et al (1966) report that the perception of geometric figures differs from culture to culture. Variations in perception would account for the variations in linquistic patterns described by Kochman (1972).[1]

It is in response to observations of the effect of culture on individuals and groups as expressed in symbolic repertoires, that the Whorf hypothesis about language and perception was born. To illustrate this point, Whorf (1940, p. 217) presented the example of a lack of temporal quality (past, present, future) in Hopi language. Kluckhohn (1941, p. 112) presented the example of the single Navaho term for the colors we call "blue" and "green." In the case of both examples, the Hopi and Navaho have been proven to have the sensory capacity to perceive and thus distinguish temporality and color terms respectively. However, in Hopi and Navaho <u>interpretation</u> of the events and processes inherent in their indigeneous environments, these concepts are

not accorded significant meaning. So cultures do differ and that fact does complicate intercultural communication.

It stands to reason that when one is studying intercultural communication, one must study culture. Since we are aware that communicative events do not occur in a vacuum but rather in a socio-cultural context, we implicitly, if not explicitly, include culture in most of our discussions of either intra- or intercultural communication. However, the definitions we generally use as referents are concerned with culture at the level of manifest or observable expression, that is behavior. This tends to limit us to only one aspect of culture. This appears to be the case whether the definition is long and fairly inclusive (Porter, 1972) or brief and exclusive (Sitaram, 1971). Consequently, our definitions, when boiled down to bare bones, are centered around the expressive level of shared patterns of behavior (most often language and custom).

So we amass endless information about patterns of behavior on the global scale, because to gather information about patterns of behavior between two or more groups necessitates that we gather the same data for all groups or for the groups we subjectively feel are important. As communication theorists and/or teachers, we are being in this pursuit neither productive nor efficient. The data we seek has already been compiled by countless ethnographers and is available through the Human Relations Area Files.[2] These files contain a world sample of 400 cultures and data is categorized across 89 headings of cultural data.

So masses of information exist. But, frankly, we must beware of this: While chronicles and catalogs offer exotic and exciting bits of information about particular groups of people, they may leave the student prone to regard others as objects of curiosity rather than as fellow humans especially if this type of information is presented out of context of its cultural significance. Behavior is a superficial aspect of culture. If we analyze cultures behavioristically, they will all appear to be strikingly, prohibitively different. Social scientists have not as yet uncovered any universal laws governing human behavior, but there do appear to be universal forces (needs) which motivate human behavior. And, as this paper will point out, all cultures have a similar basis. By focusing only on the expressive aspect of culture, we neglect the concept of culture as an entity having structure and function, and culture processes such as maintenance and change. Because once we begin to operationalize our research in terms of shared patterns of behavior, differences tend to emerge, and more basic similarities between people are obscured.

Perhaps a more practical solution could be found for both theoretical communication study and actual interaction if we can identify the inevitable similarities among cultures and thus provide a holistic frame of reference for viewing the interface between human-kind, culture, and communication, and for studying "humans and culture" and "communication and culture."

A holistic definition of culture will make it possible to be cognizant of similarities as well as differences between peoples around the world. Another advantage of such a definition

would be to de-emphasize the quantitative type of study that seeks only causality between variables across groups of people and to place emphasis on qualitative study which would permit a "way of knowing" through the eyes of people who comprise groups. To be adequate for our needs, a definition must explicity link human communication and culture and clarify the relationship between culture and communication. Then, perhaps our skills could be used in providing insights of an interpretative nature on our data as it pertains to communication between humans.

II.

A SYSTEMIC VIEW OF HUMANS, CULTURE, AND COMMUNICATION

Culture functions to regulate human behavior. Culture provides humans with repertoires of automatic responses to various stimuli, and provides constraints and alternatives for human behavior. Culture is permitted by humans to function in this manner because of an apparently universal assumption that group, rather than individual, effort is more productive and efficient in satisfying core needs.

Humans, like other animals, require the satisfaction of their core needs: hunger, procreation, and protection. There are, needless to say, distinctions between humans and other animals. Humans are distinguished from higher primates by several physiological features (the opposable digit, power and precision grip; shift from quadrupedalism to bipedialism; etc.), and, most of all, by certain psychological features.[3] The most notable of these is the development of consciousness, that is, knowledge of "self"

and of "others," and the development of cognition. It is cognition which is of interest here. For clarity in this discussion, let us say that cognition involves only three processes: perception, organization, and interpretation. The development of cognition may be regarded as a response to external pressures (environmental imperatives) and internal pressures (emotional and physical) and to the urge to satisfy core needs.[4]

The three processes of cognition, perception, organization and interpretation, and the subsequent abilities (such as memory, imagination, abstracting, etc.) they produce for humans together with environmental stimulants are the interactive field in which culture is born and nurtured.

Culture may be called the system within which humans perform the tasks of survival. Now a system is an entity comprised of interrelated and interdependent components interacting to sustain the whole. Systems may be open or closed but for our purposes it is best to consider culture as an open system. Hall and Fagen (1956, p. 18) define an open system as "a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes." An important aspect of the open system is stressed by Bertalanffy (1968, p. 32), "Open systems are so named because they exist only through continual exchanges with the environment."

"Exchanges" refers to a constant flow of either matter, energy, or information or any combination thereof (Bertalanffy, 1968, p. 39). From the structural point of view then, culture is an open system which exists as a result of the interaction or exchanges between humans and their environment.

Model here

The model of human cognition which I have drawn (fig. 1), is based on White's (1949) position that culture is a distinct entity capable of conceptualization in and of itself--without benefit of artifacts or other tangible attributes.

The model suggests an open system and depicts environments and humans existing in an interactive field bounded by the universe. The term environment is used in the most broad and general terms because environments or realities vary through time and with locale. Humans in the model refer to any people at any point in time or place. The model represents the cognitive level of culture.

Model here

The second model (fig. 2) is also based on White (1949). This model represents the affective level of culture. White says there are three primary subsystems in any and all cultures: they are technological, sociological, and ideological. The model suggests that culture intervenes between man and his various environments. Humans are depicted as within "culture" and the three subsystems are expressions, or articulations, of human effort.

To what do the technological, sociological, and ideological cultural subsystems refer? The technological subsystem refers to the human use of energy in the solving of life tasks. Tasks emanate from the effort to satisfy core needs in order to adapt for survival. Humans may use their own innate energies (for instance in the transporting of objects from one place to another) or may extend their energies (as in the construction of a device to facilitate the transport of objects from one place to another). One may observe the demonstration of energy use in one culture

through the construction of a dam; in another culture, energy use may be observed through the construction of a plow. In either culture, the technological subsystem is observable.

The sociological subsystem refers to how humans group themselves in order to solve life tasks. Groupings of people emanate from the effort to satisfy core needs. One of the readily identifiable and observable ways of grouping is the reckoning of kinship among group members. Another observable way of grouping is based on geographic territory, and so we may observe bands, clans, tribes, villages, etc. which differentiate a group from other groups.

The ideological subsystems refers to a manner, unique to humans, of explaining themselves in relationship to self, others, and to the universe. This subsystem may be termed explanations of life crises (birth and death) and life origins (the beginning and ending of all life). The manifestation of this subsystem is reflected in myth, legend, riddle and ritual. In one culture, we may observe the recounting of the meeting between the sun and moon on an island in a lake and the conceiving of the first member of a particular group; or we may observe the recounting of how ships arrived and landed at a particular port and that port's being proclaimed sacred. No matter what the details, there are explanations of origin and other explanations which move and guide one from birth through life to death.

There is a continual flow of matter, energy, and information among the three cultural systems, and between the collective subsystems and the environment. Change in the physical environment

may portend change in the expression of all of the three subsystems. Changes from within a culture (such as through innovation, invention) may precipitate change in the expression of all the subsystems. Change external to a culture (such as through contact, diffusion) may precipitate change in the expression of all the subsystems. No matter what the source of change, the whole of culture remains integrated and continuity exists among the three subsystems, though expressions of the subsystems will vary over time and from locale to locale. The subsystems should be viewed as components of the total adaptative mechanism we call culture, and as long as there may be humans, there will be culture.

So all cultures are similar in that they embrace environments, and humans in an interaction. What is more, the models of the cognitive level of culture (fig. 1) and the affective level of culture (fig. 2) may be combined to show an interact system, an interact system which is identical for all cultures. Within that catholicity there is an instance of special interest to communication scholars: communication is central to interaction.

During protocultural times (perhaps as early as Australopithecus) humans acquired an attribute which dramatically set us apart from the higher primate forms, the ability to symbol. The ability to symbol is so closely tied to human consciousness and cognition that it is pointless here to engage in an argument about which precedes the other. Geertz (1973, pp. 47-49) very succintly outlines how culture and humans evolve together. He presupposes an extended period of overlap between protocultural activity and the several biological and psychological changes which did, and

which still are, occurring in humans. Geertz (1973) also speaks of the relationship between symbolling and culture:

> As our central nervous system--and most particularly its crowning curse and glory, the neocortex--grew up in great part in interaction with culture, it is incapable of directing our behavior or organizing our experience without the guidance provided by systems of significant symbols.

White (1949, p. 363) offers this definition of culture, which I believe to be an important one for communication theorists because it makes explicit the relationship between culture and communication. While I am not suggesting that we adopt this particular definition, it does provide an example of the type of holistic perspective which will enhance our study of intercultural communication.

> Culture is the name of a distinct order, or class of phenomena, namely those things and events that are dependent upon the exercise of a mental ability, peculiar to the human species, that we have termed 'symbolling.'

The ability to symbol and thus to engage in communication is the ingredient which makes possible the sustenance of the entire system. Whereas in the first model (fig. 1), structure is provided the system through man's cognitive processes (perception, organization, and interpretation of the events and objects in his reality or environment), the structure of the second model (fig. 2) is provided through the three cultural subsystems and the continuous exchange between them. Communication or symbolization is the feedback[5] mechanism regulating the integration of all parts with the whole. Thayer (1968, p. 17) defined communication in terms which illustrate how it functions to join together culture, humans, and the environment.

> Communication may thus be conceived of as the dynamic process underlying the existence, growth, change, the behavior of all living systems--individual and organization. Communication can be understood as that indispensable function of people and organization through which the organization or the organism relates itself to its environment, and its parts and its processes one to the other.

Culture is learned rather than transmitted biologically. And, it is through symbollic interaction that we learn our culture. Geertz (1973, p. 49) has remarked:

> . . . To supply the additional information necessary to be able to act, we were forced, in turn, to rely more and more heavily on cultural sources--the accumulated fund of significant symbols. Such symbols are thus not mere expressions, instrumentalities, or correlates of our biological, psychological and social existence; they are prerequisites of it.

The process of communication integrates humans with culture. Communication through symbolic repertoires, in turn, influences the evolution of culture over time and itself is influenced by culture. Members of cultural systems learn to perceive, organize and interpret reality in terms of their culturally significant symbolic repertoires.

Cultures may appear distinctive or unique in their technological, sociological, and ideological subsystems. However, no culture is different in its components from any other.

If we accept this holistic image of culture, then culture will provide a frame of reference or context within which we view diversity of cultural expression and articulation.

III.

THE STUDY OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

To continue with the proposition that culture is an open system, there is one additional significant point which distinguishes open from closed systems:

> One interesting characteristic of closed systems is that their eventual state is always determinable from the initial conditions. . . . This is not the case for open systems, where the same final state may be reached from different initial conditions and in different ways. (Ruben, 1972, p. 129)

If we consider "final state" as cultural expression, and consider "different initial conditions" as various interactions which might develop, then we realize that although interactions vary, the final state, cultural expression, is always present.

Additionally, as suggested by Irvine (1972, p. 16), there are some basic concepts across cultures.

> Behind the syntax of speech lies a network of concepts that have been learned along with the language itself. These are the implicit ideas and concepts that serve as a frame of reference for language and communication. All cultures share some basic concepts in common. For example, sign language would be impossible if some concepts were not shared by all. Nevertheless, concepts will vary from culture to culture to the degree that different cultures make specialized use of certain concepts.

What basic concepts are held across cultures; what or where are the places to look for them; what could be our entry level for study and analysis; and what methods and techniques should be used to conduct our inquiries?

Basic Concepts

Culture is a cognitive entity that we make inferences about; society is the arena in which the basic cultural concepts or principles are played out in routine and everyday interaction. Society is used here to mean peoples, traditions, customs, institutions (political, educational, economic, religious) which are expressions of the three cultural subsystems; all of these form a network which holds a culture together through time. Society may be thought of as the "container" of culture in that manifestations of culture may be observed in society, and thus, inferences may be drawn about the essence of a culture. In society, one may perceive and identify the three cultural subsystems in interaction with one another. I suggest that there are four identifiable basic concepts or principles inherent in cultures which underlie the subsystems' interaction. These concepts may be observed in societies through various features which will be described later. We may regard these as primary concepts.

The first of these is the concept of unity, how parts co-mingle and relate to the whole to establish concordance or agreement. Unity is reflected in the various ways that people group themselves to establish recognized units such as families, bands, clans, tribes, villages, towns, cities, states, nations. Size of groupings does not obscure the existence of the concept of unity. Types of groupings may vary with environmental circumstances, and thus, role ascription, kinship patterns, norms, and so on will also vary in accord. Nevertheless, there is present in every culture the motivation to achieve group unity.

The second of the basic concepts is that of order, how the parts are arranged in the whole to establish structure. Order is reflected in the processes of categorization and classification, that is, the arrangement of objects, events, processes and peoples into a relational, hierarchial structure. Ordering structures in turn serve to maintain and regulate the whole. Lineage systems and other kinship structures are a means of ordering the passage of property and office, for instance.

The third is the concept of differentiation, how distinctions are made between parts of a whole. Differentiation is reflected in the distinction between self and others, and between the degree and kind of significance assigned to objects, events, processes and people. Totems, classes, and castes (as well as other stratification systems) are examples of a means of distinguishing among groupings of people, and often, a means of inferring territorial boundaries. A more complex example of differentiation is to be found in logical systems.

The fourth concept is reciprocity or exchange (as spoken of by Levi-Strauss, 1966), how the parts interact and transact. Reciprocity or exchange is reflected in allegiances and associations between people and institutions. Political, economic and religious systems are derived as a means of regulating exchange, and, as such, are the sites of power/authority, problem-solving, and decision-making processes.

These concepts are intricately woven into the fabric of any culture. They interact in a circular fashion so that any one concept appears both to precipitate and give direction or emphasis

to the others. They are revealed often simultaneously and in various combinations. Any one of these concepts may be more central to the whole of the expression of one culture than others.

These basic concepts are evident in the social arena in the various governing rules which bind culture and society together. They are both explicit and implicit in the shared patterns of behavior with which culture provides us. We constantly find ourselves making inferences and even judgments about a culture based on these concepts. Such statements as: those people are prejudiced (differentiation); those people are confused (order); those people are selfish and self-centered (reciprocity and exchange); those people are never together (unity). All these concepts are always present in any sociocultural configuration.

The Cultural Topoi

It was mentioned that the cultural subsystems (technological, sociological and ideological) are reflected in the social arena we call society and are thus observable. Further, I have suggested that four basic concepts underlie the interaction between the subsystems. How may we test the validity of this claim?

Model here

Consider the following scheme (fig. 3) as an example of how the three subsystems may be observed and how inferences may be drawn about the four basic concepts, and consequently about the nature of any particular culture. The scheme suggests that there are certain universal cultural features illustrative of the three subsystems, and the underlying concepts. These universal features

are the places to look for various information of interest to communication theorists. This scheme does not purport to be final but merely exploratory and suggestive of how we might proceed to answer questions about the achievement of compatibile intercultural relationships. I have used this scheme to prepare case studies of the Ibo and Yoruba people in Nigeria, and the Aymara and Quechua people in Bolivia. These case studies are too lengthy to report here in detail, but are concerned with the problems of change agents and agencies who mistakenly assume that because people reside in the same geographic locale, they are consequently members of the same cultural group. This is one type of assumption that can lead to hostile and ineffective communication and failure of the objectives of the change program. Agencies concerned with directed social change could utilize information and generalizations derived from this type of analytic tool.

While this scheme is presented in a somewhat linear fashion, none of the features mentioned is discrete or static; all interact with one another and each is a reflection of the others. This scheme is only a convenient device to aid in conceptualization.

I believe it is easy now to conceive that any of the features mentioned will be expressed in various forms and ways. The symbolic repertoires (language and social practice) particularly reflect the propensity for variety which is inherent in humankind, but other features may reveal more subtle types of diversity of greater importance. The point, however, is that all human cultures can be studied and analyzed through these features.

For example, bands of Bushmen in the Kalahari Desert make differentiations among themselves in the division of labor (in this case, the hunting and gathering of daily food supplies). If an antelope is killed, there is possibly food for another day. This food must be distributed among members of the band, and should any surplus accrue through either the hunting or gathering activity, some plan must be launched for the re-distribution based on various criteria such as who is the best hunter, gatherer, the most needy, etc. The criteria for distribution and re-distribution vary across cultures. Identification for the criteria developed to govern the distribution, re-distribution, divisions of labor, makes it possible to draw certain inferences in regard to the relationships of individuals to the group and the group to each individual. Values and attitudes become apparent through this type of analysis. The basic concepts of unity, order and exchange also are reflected in this example.

Although the features used in this particular scheme are present in all cultures, societal expression of any feature(s) may indeed be more complex in one society than in another. Complexity does not necessarily equate with cultural superiority. That complexity indicates superiority is a misconception about cultures. Complexity is best used to describe societies rather than cultures. As long as there has been culture and man, and for as long as there may be culture and man, the features of culture will remain the same. Their expression will always vary and change.

Level of Analysis and Methods and Techniques

My earlier discussion about language and social practices suggested that this is not necessarily the most productive level for analysis. Instead, the three cultural subsystems are the most productive level for analysis. Language and social practices are merely derivations of them.

One requirement for determining the appropriate mode of analysis is that it be sufficiently broad that we not lose sight of the interrelatedness and interdependence between the parts of a whole. Another requirement is that the mode of analysis be one that can be applicable to the entire universe of whatever it is that we are studying. In other words, the analysis must pertain to components universally present in all cultures. Failure to ascertain the most productive level of analysis can result in our being concerned about the absence or presence of discrete cultural traits and then making judgments about this absence or presence. I believe that by using the three subsystems as the level of analysis, we will minimize this tendency.

Another issue is units for analysis. As communication theorists it seems more in line with our interests to concern ourselves with interpersonal units, such as dyads, triads and small groups, and communities rather than with entire countries, states or nations. This limited approach is less risky. Because of vast changes in territorial and political boundaries over the past 20 years, we can easily be deceived into believing that because people occupy the same political and geographic territory

currently, they are a homogeneous cultural group. The newly independent countries of Africa are a good example of the vast change which has occurred without respect for tribal allegiances and associations. However, should study be based on larger units for analysis, such as entire races, ethnic populations, nations, etc., scholars must be aware of certain recent changes and must design their studies to reflect the political re-shuffling of peoples.

It is my opinion that qualitative methods supplemented by quantitative methods might unravel the mysteries of intercultural communication. Studies which employ naturalistic techniques, such as participant-observation and its various subsidary approaches, would tend to reveal the world through the eyes of the viewer. For instance, the gathering of life-history data which is then scrutinized through either network analysis or content analysis would provide rich insights into significant values, attitudes, and beliefs of people. Systematic observation of particular events and activities such as community council meetings, public and private events, and ceremonies will provide information not readily forthcoming in experimental designs. An interesting analysis of this type was performed by Albert (1964). Insight into the purposive communication behavior of the Burundi people of Central Africa is provided in her article.

Below is a partial listing of questions of potential interest to communication theorists. Answers to this type of question reveal information about interpersonal relations, small group relations, and communities. I think this type of question

is of use because it will elicit an in-depth picture of how peoples from contrast cultures view themselves, others, and the world. It is in these often more elusive and subtle areas that we flounder in intercultural communicative acts.

These questions involve what I term "secondary" concepts and these, too, appear to be universally perceived and conceived.

1. What is play?
2. What is serious? What is funny?
3. What is honor? and What is respect?
4. What is evil? and What is good?
5. What is strength? and What is weakness?

(This list could continue)

This set of questions is intended to elicit information about the "ideal" and, thus, the definitional elements pertaining to the concept. The same set of questions should be asked in the action mode, i.e., What is playing?, etc., and in the personal mode, Who plays together (or with whom)? This would tend to get into the actual normative behavior surrounding the acting out of any of the concepts.

For instance, in the questions What is love? What is loving? Who is loved? the responses would reveal kinship patterns and patterns of education/socialization (enculturation) processes. One may love biological kin or not; one's allegiances and associations may be stronger with one's age-set group rather than with one's siblings or biological parents. The same would

pertain with questions about honor and respect. These questions have to do with values and attitudes toward roles and status between roles. Information about the site of decision-making, and power/authority is also often revealed through questions having to do with the division of labor, distribution/re-distribution. Are individual members of a contrast culture empowered to make their own decisions, or must they consult with others? Who are the significant others? This type of information has implications for change agents who often consult with the incorrect individuals in a contrast culture.

If we can adopt this approach to study and research, then we will better understand statements made by members of contrast cultures. An example of possible misunderstanding occurred during the Biafran War and immediately thereafter, when so many babies and young children were dying. An Ibo of my acquaintance made the remark that the dying of the children was not a big problem, although a sad one; "Babies can be replaced," were his words. Without careful examination, this statement may appear callous to some liberalized Americans, but the statement actually reflects the Ibo attitude and value that the group as a whole is more important than any one of its individual members.

For those who will criticize on the grounds that my approach sounds too much like anthropology, let me say that the ethnographer collects a wide range of data about everything that happens in a setting. The aim is to describe events, activities, processes. Communication theorists, on the other hand, through the use of the generally recognized social science methods and

techniques mentioned above, can perform problem-oriented research that focuses on people rather than on structure, function, traits or processes. People are the center of our profession: who they communicate with, about what, their styles of communication, and the values which motivate certain styles are central issues in intercultural communication. However, this research must be conducted in a holistic frame of reference.

There are several current books about the types of study and methods I am proposing: Edgerton and Langness, Methods and Styles in the Study of Culture, (1974); Schatzman and Strauss, Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology, (1973), are two such examples.

Naturalistic research such as I am proposing should be based on sound knowledge about culture in general, and the specific cultures one is attempting to study. This type of background knowledge is available through the Human Relations Area Files. The Files are kept current, and suggest many interesting research questions for communication theorists. For instance: ethnocentrism is a variable that may hinder intercultural communication; these files contain data which indicates the nature of contact situations between various cultural groups, and from this data questions arise as to the ways in which ethnocentrism is expressed by various groups, and the particular standards groups may tend to be ethnocentric about. Answers to this type of question can have far-reaching implications for change agents and others who may come in contact with contrasting cultures.

Our own country is a rich field of cultural variety. Perhaps study of the type proposed here, performed by interested

and well-trained communication theorists, would have the effect of minimizing the tendency to interpret variety as deviance when that variety is expressed by minority populations.

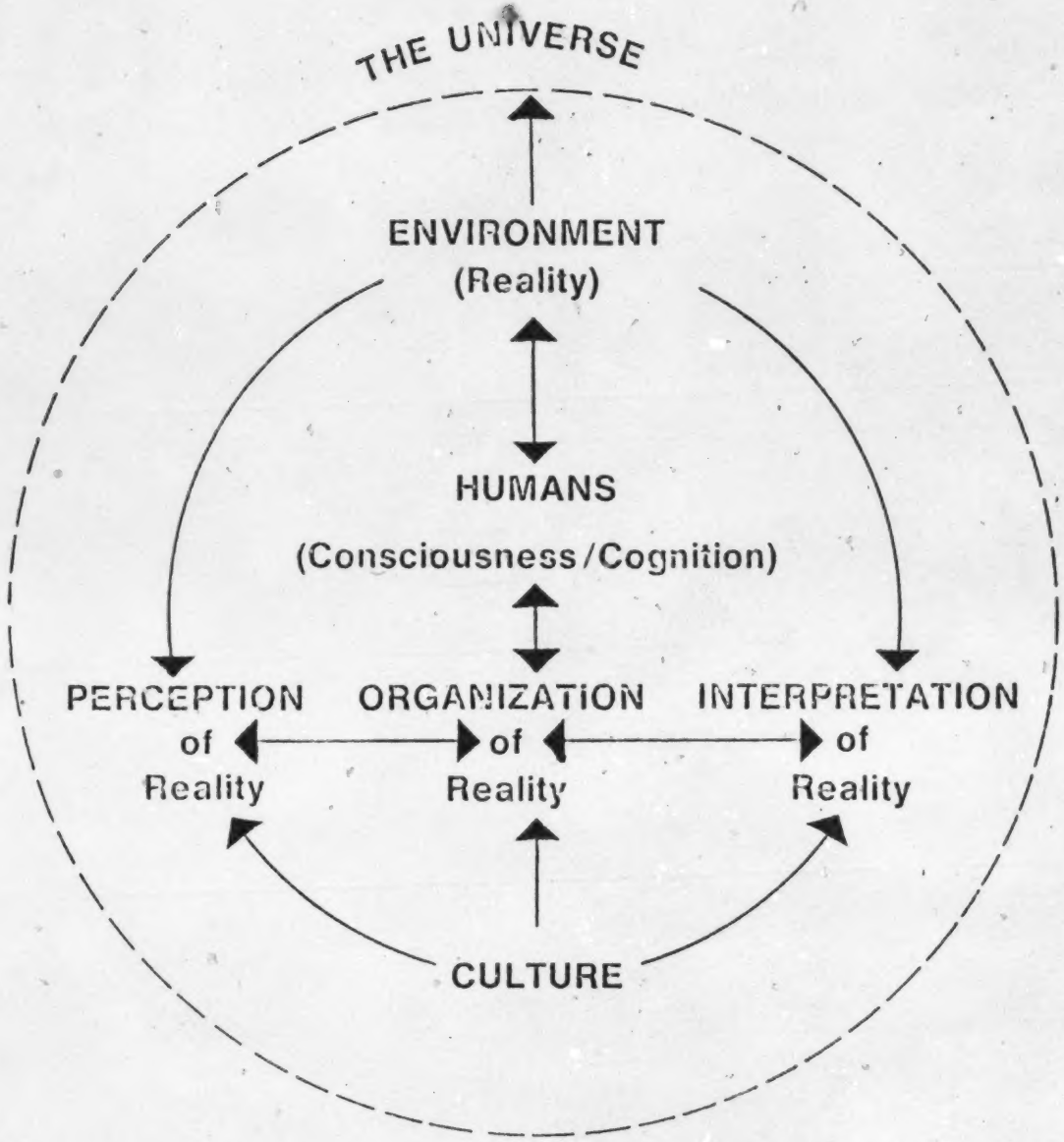

Fig. 1. Cognitive Level of Culture. (Leslie A. White, The Science of Culture, New York: Farrar Straus and Cudahy Co., 1949).

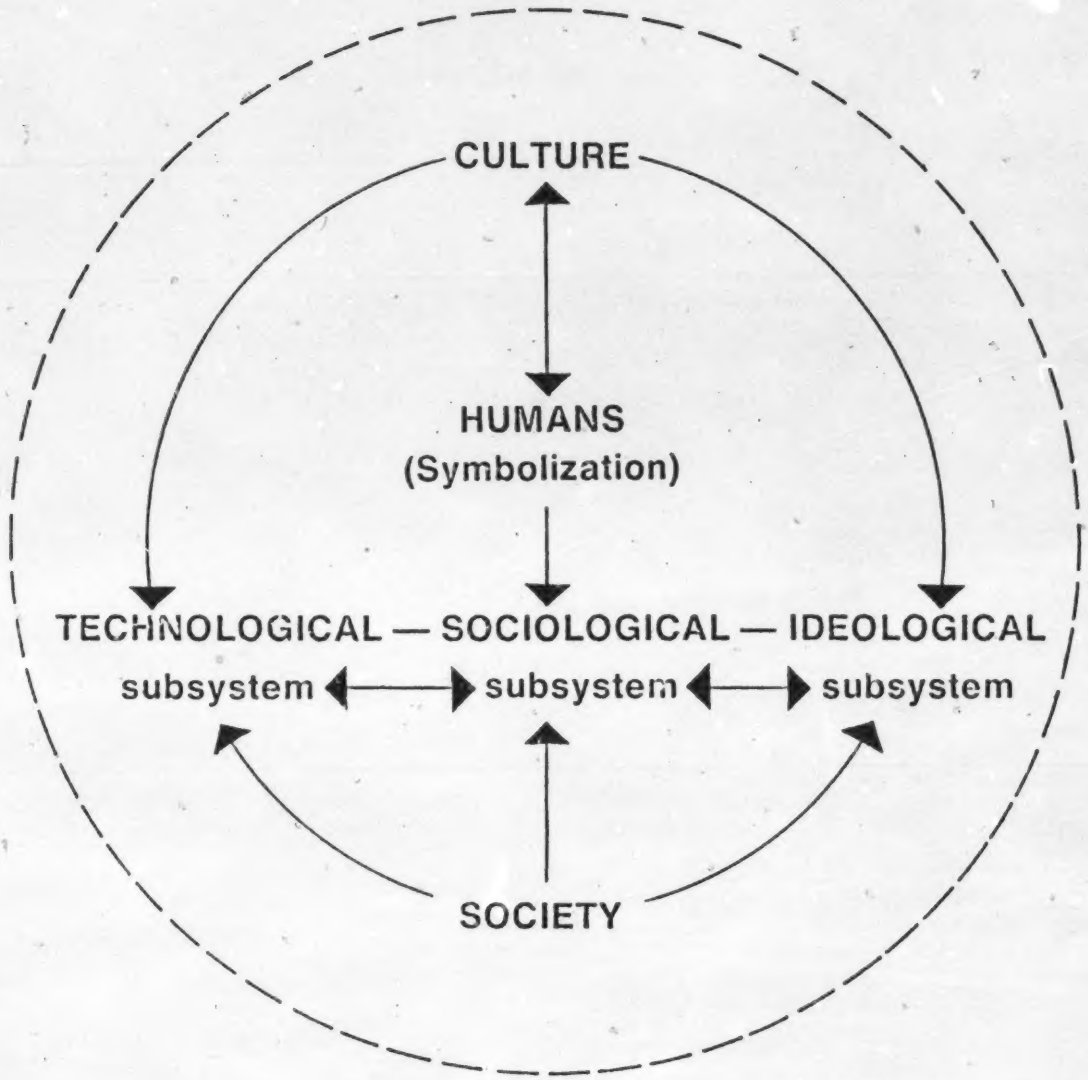

Fig. 2. Affective Level of Culture. (Leslie A. White, The Science of Culture, New York: Farrar Straus and Cudahy Co., 1949).

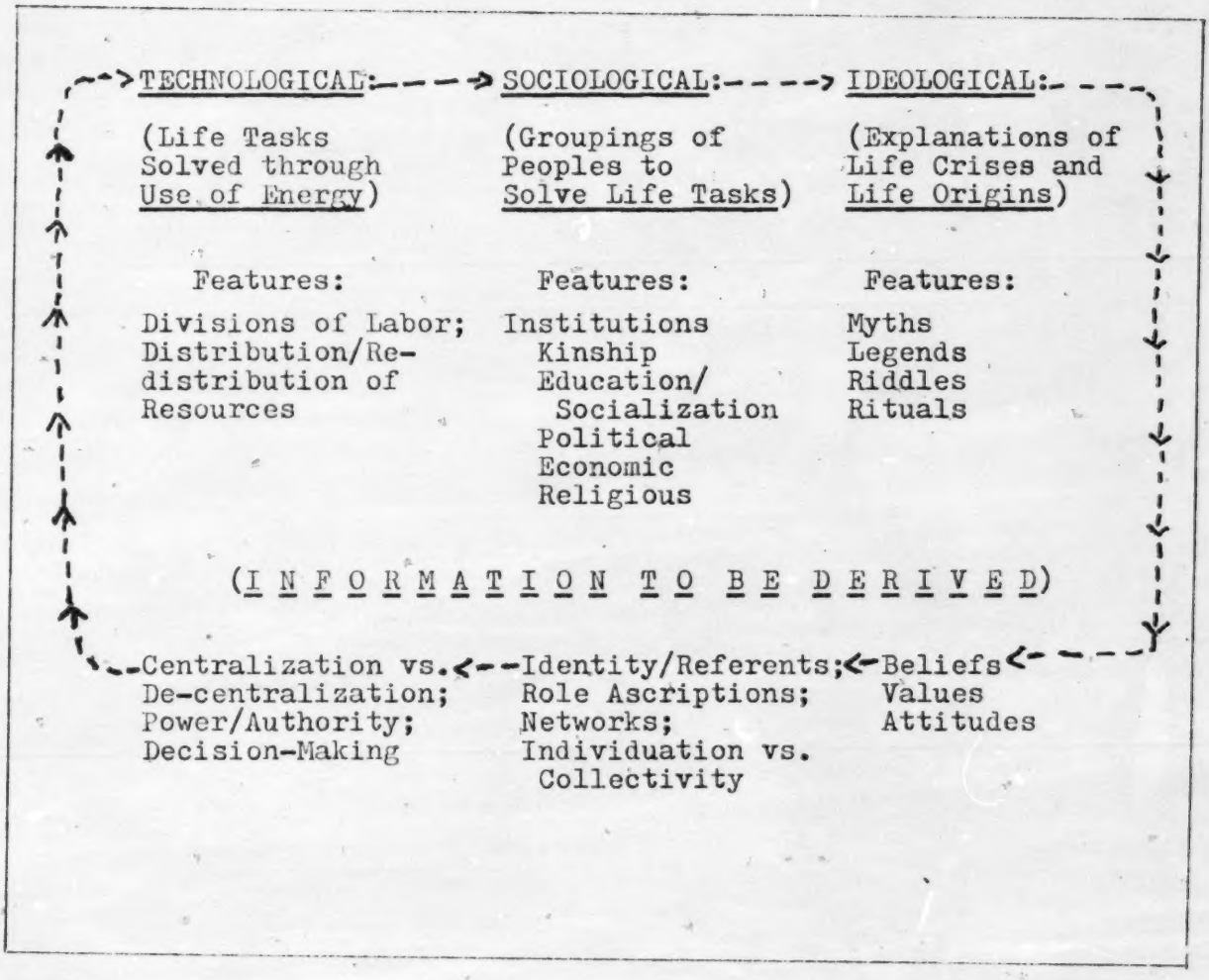

Fig. 3. Cultural Subsystems and their Features.

Notes

1. In addition to those mentioned, see Cross-Cultural Studies of Behavior, ed. Ihsan Al-Issa and Wayne Dennis (1970), and Cross-Cultural Studies: Selected Readings, ed. Douglas Price-Williams (1969). Both contain excellent examples of studies performed across a broad range of cultures. As a result of the findings from these and similar studies, there has developed in the past 15 years a branch of anthropology devoted to discovering cognitive patterns among members of contrast cultures rather than merely describing events and activities practiced by members of contrast cultures. See Cognitive Anthropology, ed. Stephen A. Tyler (1969).

2. The Human Relations Area Files is a comprehensive inventory of ethnographic materials which grew out of G. P. Murdock, Outline of Cultural Materials (1950). Materials referenced for various cultures are rated as to reliability, and the Files are kept current. The complete Files are available through Yale University and 24 other American universities.

3. For in-depth discussion of these points, I recommend Geza Roheim, "The Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Culture" and Warner Muensterberger, "On the Cultural Determinants of Individual Development," both in Man and His Culture, ed. Muensterberger (1969).

4. Geertz provides a more detailed discussion of this and related points in the Introduction to his book, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (1973).

5. Norbert Wiener, and C. E. Shannon and Warren Weaver introduced the term "feedback" in 1948 and 1949 respectively. However, Magoroh Maruyama contributed another aspect to cybernetics with the introduction of what he termed "deviation-amplifying mutual causal processes." He stated: "The deviation-counteracting mutual causal systems and the deviation-amplifying mutual causal systems may appear to be opposite types of systems. But they have one essential feature in common: they are both mutual causal systems, i.e., the elements within a system influence each other either simultaneously or alternatingly. The difference between the two types of systems is that the deviation-counteracting system has mutual negative feedback between the elements in it while the deviation-amplifying system has mutual positive feedback between the elements in it." ("The Second Cybernetics," 12.)

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